

**Distribution:**  
Sworn Personnel: X  
Civilian Personnel:  
NECC:

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**Chapter 7**  
**Motor Vehicle Operations**

**POLICY AND PROCEDURE**  
**IN THE OPERATION OF POLICE VEHICLES**

**I. PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures regarding the operation of police vehicles in a safe and responsible manner. The policy will also outline operational procedures to follow in a variety of circumstances.

**II. POLICY:**

It is the policy of this agency that all persons, sworn and civilian, be safeguarded from unreasonable and unsafe movements of police vehicles. It is also the policy of this agency that when circumstances arise regarding accidents with police vehicles, or unsafe driving of police vehicles, that this agency investigate to its fullest extent to determine the facts of the matter. The operation of any police vehicle will be taken seriously by the occupant(s) and according to existing policy and law.

**III. PROCEDURES:**

A. License & Registration Requirements:

1. No person shall operate a departmental vehicle of any kind unless he has a valid operator's license to operate such a vehicle. All departmental vehicles shall be properly registered and insured according to Town of Newtown regulations.

B. Authority to Operate:

1. No person shall operate a department vehicle without receiving orders or permission from a supervisor. Assignments of police vehicles are to be completed by supervisors only. All deployed vehicles shall be noted on the daily duty roster and shall be entered by ETDs into the department CAD system. It shall be the responsibility of the supervisor of the shift in maintaining an accurate account of all police officers in police vehicles and ensuring that they are logged "on-duty" through department in-house computers and daily rosters.

C. Police Officers as Riders:

1. All police officers wishing to ride in police vehicles on off-duty time must first obtain permission from the Shift Commander. It shall be the responsibility of the supervisor of the shift to have all police officers in police vehicles logged “on-duty” through department in-house computers and daily rosters.

D. Riders:

1. Unless authorized, no person shall be permitted to ride as a passenger in a departmental vehicle, except when necessary for the performance of a proper police duty.
2. From time to time, civilian Town of Newtown employees, or civilians will be authorized to ride in department vehicles during a patrol shift for the purposes of building and maintaining positive relationships and for educating the rider of police duties and responsibilities. Approved ride-alongs are those authorized under the Citizen’ Police Academy, Student’s Police Academy, and field training for NECC personnel. All other riders must receive the permission of the Chief of Police or Captain.
3. All riders must complete a waiver of liability form prior to the ride along.
4. When a rider is present, officers will not engage in vehicle pursuits, or subject the rider to unnecessary dangers, which can be reasonably avoided. Riders will not be permitted to enter private residences or other locations where a reasonable expectation of privacy exists.
5. Riders will not be allowed to carry any weapons, will be identified with an appropriate “observer” outer garment, and must wear department approved body armor. The rider will have to follow all the officer’s instructions or have the ride-along discontinued immediately.
6. Riders will not be permitted to ride in excess of 4 hours unless given prior permission by the Chief or Captain.
7. Under certain extreme circumstances, an Officer may have the rider exit the patrol car to tend to a dangerous call. The rider will be let out in well-lit area or safe area such as an open supermarket and the officer will notify the department of such.
8. Supervisors will closely monitor any ride-along for compliance with this policy and to maintain directional command control over all situations.

E. Safe Driving of Police Vehicles and Privacy Issues:

1. The driver of any police vehicle shall operate said vehicle in a reasonable and safe manner, exercising due caution and judgment. He shall operate the police vehicle in compliance with motor vehicle laws and traffic regulations, except when in actual pursuit or in responding to an emergency or in the lawful performance of his police duties, during which time he will strictly adhere to the driving procedures established for the operation of emergency vehicles, as contained in policies and procedures of the department. Particularly in emergency situations, all due caution will be exercised when driving through school zones or highly populated areas.
2. Officers will and should recognize that any individual privacy rights in a Town Vehicle are not applicable. Today’s technologies allow for:

- a. the electronic recording of radio transmissions,
  - b. the electronic recording of vehicle movements and other vehicle operational data through the vehicle's "black box",
  - c. the electronic recording of vehicle movements and voice recording of onboard mobile video and audio recording (MVR) equipment,
  - d. the electronic recording of communications (written) by way of onboard-networked computers and
  - e. the electronic recording of vehicle locations by way of onboard-networked computers and GPS equipment.
3. The department reserves the right to access these technologies for important data whenever the retrieval, review or monitoring of the data meets its organizational objectives.

F. Accidents Involving Police Vehicles, Injuries Inflicted to Persons or Damage to Property:

1. Whenever a member of the department is involved in an accident while operating a police vehicle or in anyway injures a person or damages property with the police vehicle, the member shall immediately notify the Shift Supervisor. (Refer to Policy and Procedure #7-1).
2. Whenever a member of the department is involved in an accident while operating a police vehicle or in anyway injures a person or damages property with the police vehicle, it shall be investigated by the shift supervisor or by a person of the next highest rank whenever possible.
3. [Accidents involving police vehicles from other law enforcement agencies shall be investigated the same. If impartiality becomes a burden, the Chief may request the accident be investigated by a third party agency.](#)

G. Responsibility for Vehicle:

1. The operator of a departmental vehicle shall be responsible for the serviceability of the vehicle assigned to his use. Except when the vehicle is in emergency use, the operator shall inspect the vehicle when it is turned over to him and shall render a written report to the Shift Supervisor of any defect, damage, or unserviceability of said vehicle. Members of the Department assigned to vehicles shall report the condition of the vehicle on approved forms.

H. Other Operational Issues of Departmental Vehicles:

1. No person shall use a departmental vehicle for the purpose of pushing another vehicle nor shall a departmental vehicle be towed by another vehicle except by the towing facilities provided by the Department, unless otherwise directed by the Shift Supervisor. No person shall operate a departmental vehicle that has a deflated tire or when there is evidence of an apparent mechanical defect. Police vehicle engines shall not be unnecessarily idled for extended periods of time.

I. Unattended Police Vehicles:

1. Generally, the operator of a departmental vehicle shall lock the ignition and remove the key upon leaving the vehicle except in emergencies situations. When leaving the vehicle unattended for more than a brief period, he shall lock the doors.